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Obstacles to female medical students' participation in sports activities and proposed solutions to encourage participation at Al-Qadisiyah University

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Abstract

The research aims to identify the obstacles to female students' participation in sports activities at Al-Qadisiyah University and the proposed solutions to encourage participation. The researchers used a descriptive survey approach due to its suitability to the problem and nature of the research. The researchers selected the research sample using a simple random method from female students in the College of Medicine at Al-Qadisiyah University from all academic levels for the academic year (2023-2024). The primary research sample consisted of (44) female students. The researchers used a questionnaire as a data collection tool. They conducted scientific validity and reliability tests to standardize the tool and used statistical treatments appropriate to the nature of the research. The most important conclusions were that those working in sports activities at Al-Qadisiyah University do not study the sports needs of female students before developing sports activities programs. The researchers also do not motivate female students to participate in sports activities. The most important recommendation of the researchers is that spreading cultural awareness of the importance of practicing sports activities by the presidency of Al-Qadisiyah University through publications that highlight the benefits of participating in sports activities leads to female students' willingness to practice sports activities within the university. Outside of university, provide sufficient time to participate in sports activities by restructuring class hours for other courses.

Keywords: Al-Qadisiyah University, obstacles, participation, sports, activities

Introduction

Today, it is possible to see changes and differentiations at certain rates in all areas of life. In the face of this change and differentiation, organizations have made an effort to keep up with the times and conditions.

One of the most important goals of university education, in its educational sense, is to create a suitable environment for students' balanced and integrated growth. This, in addition to other aspects, enables them to acquire the basic knowledge and skills that prepare them to serve and develop members of society in various areas of life (Iman, Huda, 2014) ^[10].

In its efforts to raise its students in a comprehensive manner, aiming to enable them to achieve mature and integrated growth, the university seeks to provide them with a range of services with developmental characteristics through youth care facilities, at the forefront of which are sports activities programs (Mufti, 2005) ^[11].

Physical educational activity is an integral part of general education and an experimental field aimed at forming citizens who are mentally, emotionally, and socially fit. This is achieved through various types of physical activity tested to achieve set objectives (Rabouh, 2013) ^[12].

The researchers believe that sports activities play an important role in individuals' lives, as they develop individuals physically, health-wise, psychologically, and intellectually. Studies have confirmed that regular exercise protects individuals from various diseases such as osteoporosis, obesity, and aging. It also plays a significant role in developing good behavior, improving social interaction, and giving the body a healthy body and the ability to perform daily activities without feeling stressed or tired.

Hence, the important role of various sports activity programs in caring for members of society, including university students, becomes apparent. Sports activities at the university are an outlet for the student to self-actualize. (Shaheen, Waleed, 2023) ^[9].

Educational physical activity is an integral part of general education, and leaving this phenomenon without scientific study will only increase and expand. Through this research, we will learn about the extent of the influence of parents' perspectives, societal customs and traditions, the role of those in charge of sports activities, university capabilities, and student behavior. We will attempt to find appropriate solutions to this phenomenon in order to raise the level of female student participation in sports activities both inside and outside the University of Al-Qadisiyah.

Research Problem

Practicing sports regularly and regularly is a fundamental factor in building a girl's personality in all aspects: physical, intellectual, health-related, and social. This helps make her a useful and important member of society, in addition to other important building blocks: religious, cultural, and scientific. Therefore, practicing sports activities is of fundamental value in a girl's daily life, given the physical, educational, psychological, and social benefits it provides. Physically, it strengthens and activates all muscles. Educationally, practicing sports leads to the acquisition of new motor skills. Mentally, it helps develop mental and emotional abilities in general. It also helps students avoid psychological complexes, which often cause psychological disorders. It also allows students to gain a distinctive social standing through interaction with others, which leads to increased relationships with others. The university is the highest educational institution in the country, and is responsible for achieving the integrated development of students. One of the components of this development is the practice of various sports activities for boys and girls, by providing equipment, tools, playgrounds, halls, and specialized sports cadres to implement the sports program for university students. Female students are a fundamental segment of society, and investing in this segment in the field of sports benefits society in order to achieve development in all fields. In light of the necessity and importance of practicing sports activities, we find a significant deficiency in the participation of female students in sports competitions at Al-Qadisiyah University. This lack of participation is attributed to a combination of psychological, social, and administrative obstacles, as well as a lack of resources that have led to the reluctance of female students to participate. This prompted the researchers to study the obstacles to female students' participation in sports activities at Al-Qadisiyah University. The researchers conducted a personal interview (non-standardized) for a group of (15) female students from the College of Medicine at Al-Qadisiyah University for the academic year (2023-2024). Some open questions were directed by the researchers to the students, including (How many times do you practice sports activities inside the university? What are the most important reasons for not participating in sports activities inside the university? Do customs and traditions play a role in your lack of participation in sports activities inside the university? The lack of sports capabilities and equipment has a negative role that prevents me from participating in sports activities inside the university? After conducting statistical treatments of the

students' answers, it became clear to the researcher that the students rarely practice sports inside the university campus, and that the psychological state of the students (feeling shy) is the most important reason for not participating in sports activities, and the sports capabilities and equipment do not meet ambition and do not motivate participation. This is what prompted the researchers to adopt this existing problem (obstacles to the practice of female students of the College of Medicine at Al-Qadisiyah University in sports activities) inside the university and try to find proposed solutions for it from the point of view of the students themselves. The researchers reviewed the results and recommendations of previous studies, such as the study of (Muhammad, 2018) ^[7], (Obstacles to practicing student activities at the Faculty of Commerce at Benha University), the study of (Iman, Hoda, 2014) ^[10], (Studying the reality of sports activities in government universities in Baghdad), the study of (Joudah at AL, 2011), "Identifying the reality of sports activities among students at the University of Basra from the point of view of university teachers and students," and the study of (Fairclough, 2006) ^[2], (The effect of physical education on improving the levels of student participation in student activities), as these studies confirmed the lack of sufficient encouragement that students receive from those in charge of sports activities programs, and there are obstacles related to the academic and scientific aspect, including the crowding of the schedule with academic courses and not allocating sufficient time to practice sports activities, and the lack of activation of the media role in spreading sports culture and awareness among students, and that the use of educational means and technologies increases student participation in sports activities such as sports films and others.

Research Objective

- The role of social customs and traditions on female students' participation in sports activities.
- The extent of the psychological impact on female students' participation in sports activities.
- The role of material and human resources at Al-Qadisiyah University on female students' participation in sports activities.
- The extent of the influence of those working on implementing sports programs at Al-Qadisiyah University on female students' participation in sports activities.
- What are the proposed solutions to encourage female students to participate in sports activities?

Research Areas

- **Human scope:** Female students of the College of Medicine at Al-Qadisiyah University.
- **Spatial scope:** College of Medicine, Al-Qadisiyah University.
- **Temporal scope:** The period from (11/12/2023) to (14/02/2024).

Research Methodology

The researchers used the descriptive survey method due to its suitability to the problem and nature of the research.

Research Community and Sample

The research community consists of all female students from the College of Medicine at Al-Qadisiyah University,

from the first to the sixth grades, for the academic year (2023-2024). The total research community amounted to (265) female students. The researchers selected the research sample using a simple random method, selecting students from all academic levels. The primary research sample consisted of (44) female students.

Data Collection Tools:

The researchers used the following to collect data:

- Reviewing records, documents, and the results and recommendations of similar studies.
- Personal interview (non-standardized).
- Questionnaire.

Steps for Developing the Questionnaire

Table 1: Number of questionnaire phrases for each axis of the questionnaire in its initial form

S	Fields	Number of phrases
1	What is the role of social customs and traditions on female students' participation in sports activities?	7
2	The extent of the psychological impact on female students' participation in sports activities.	8
3	The role of financial and human resources at Al-Qadisiyah University on female students' participation in sports activities.	8
4	The extent of the impact of those working on implementing sports programs at Al-Qadisiyah University on female students' participation in sports activities.	9
5	What are the proposed solutions to motivate female students to participate in sports activities?	13
Total		45 phrases

Table 1 shows the number of phrases for each of the questionnaire's axes in its initial form, which included (45) phrases distributed across (5) main axes.

After presenting the questionnaire form in its initial form to the experts (in order to obtain their scientific opinion regarding the suitability and appropriateness of the phrases included for each of the questionnaire's axes, and the possibility of deleting, modifying, merging, transferring, and adding any phrase they deemed inappropriate for the questionnaire form), the researchers also proposed a three-point rating scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree) to suit this type of research, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Three-point rating scale

Choice	I strongly agree	I agree	Disagree
Degree	3	2	1

The experts approved the axes, phrases, and three-point scale at a rate of (90%). Thus, the questionnaire was ready for presentation to the primary sample of the research in its final form. It contains (5) main axes and (37) phrases distributed across these axes.

Reliability

The researchers used the split-half method to calculate the test's reliability. The test was administered once in a single session. Its phrases were divided into two separate parts: the first part included odd phrases, and the second part included even phrases. The researchers calculated the correlation coefficient between these two parts using the Spearman-

Validation of the Arbitrators

The researchers identified the axes of the questionnaire in light of the research objectives, which included (5) main axes. These axes were presented to (10) experts with experience in the field of sports management, with the rank of professor and assistant professor, working in the faculties of physical education and sports sciences at various Iraqi universities. The aim was to determine the suitability of the axes to the current research topic and to make any modifications to the axes (deletion, addition, merger, modification).

After the experts approved the axes of the questionnaire, at a rate of (90%), the researchers formulated a number of phrases for each axis, as shown in the following Table 1.

Brown correlation coefficient. The test's reliability coefficient reached (0.90), indicating the test's reliability and is considered high, as a correlation coefficient greater than (0.70) is considered an appropriate correlation.

Statistical Processing: The researchers used the following statistical methods to process the primary sample's responses to the questionnaire phrases:

- Frequency distribution.
- Percentage.
- Mean.
- Standard deviation.
- Ranks.

Results and Discussions

Presentation and Discussion of results

After completing the procedures for applying the questionnaire to the primary research sample, and through the statistical analysis processes chosen by the researchers for this questionnaire mentioned above, for each paragraph of the questionnaire, the researchers presented the statistical tables shown below. These tables illustrate the frequency distribution (frequencies of the sample's responses), the relative distribution (percentage), the arithmetic mean, the standard deviation, and the rank of each paragraph of the questionnaire (i.e., its ranking relative to the sample's responses), which the paragraph obtained in the questionnaire form relative to the responses of the primary research sample.

Table 3: Frequency values, percentages, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and ranks for the first axis: The role of social customs and traditions on female students' participation in sports activities

S	Phrases	Frequencies and percentages			Mean	SD	Rank
		I strongly agree	I agree	Disagree			
1	The negative perceptions of the community around me regarding sports prevent me from participating in them.	Number	19	16	2.23	0.774	5
		%	43.2	36.4			
2	My focus on working hard in other subjects, without taking an interest in sports, prevents me from participating in them.	Number	29	12	2.59	0.622	3
		%	65.9	27.3			
3	I lose confidence when playing sports in front of the opposite gender.	Number	27	11	2.48	0.731	4
		%	61.4	25			
4	The lack of cultural awareness of the importance of playing sports has negatively impacted my participation in sports.	Number	38	6	2.86	0.347	1
		%	86.4	13.6			
5	My religious beliefs conflict with practicing sports outdoors in the presence and under the supervision of men.	Number	27	11	2.48	0.731	4
		%	61.4	25			
6	My habit of not participating in sports in previous school years has led to my current aversion to them.	Number	35	3	2.68	0.708	2
		%	79.5	6.8			

It is clear from Table 3 that the response of the basic research sample to the most prominent obstacles that limit female students' participation in sports activities is statement No 4, as it obtained the first rank among the opinions of the female students in this table, and obtained an arithmetic mean of (2.86), a standard deviation of (0.347), a percentage of (86.4), and a repetition of (38) for the answer (strongly agree), and the statement is (the absence of cultural awareness of the importance of practicing sports negatively affected my participation in sports activities). The researchers believe that the absence of cultural awareness among female students of the multiple and varied

benefits of practicing sports provides them with moral, health, and other benefits, and this in turn is due to the weak role of awareness in various media about the importance of practicing sports, and this is consistent with what was reached by the study of Eid Muhammad Kanaan (2010) ^[1], "Obstacles to the participation of female students in schools in northern Jordan in school sports activities," where it recommended (spreading sports and cultural awareness among female students and their parents to combat false beliefs such as practicing sports activities It conflicts with customs, traditions and religious teachings, or practicing sports activities affects the student's academic future.

Table 4: Frequency values, percentages, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and ranks for the second axis: The extent of the psychological impact on female students' participation in sports activities

S	Phrases	Frequencies and percentages			Mean	SD	Rank
		I strongly agree	I agree	Disagree			
7	My academic future is more important and preferable to me than participating in sports activities.	Number	38	6	2.86	0.347	3
		%	86.4	13.6			
8	I feel extremely shy when exercising in front of others.	Number	38	5	2.84	0.428	4
		%	86.4	11.4			
9	The lack of a suitable environment for female students reduces my desire to participate in sports activities.	Number	37	7	2.84	0.370	5
		%	84.1	15.9			
10	The fear of injury prevents me from participating in sports activities.	Number	39	5	2.89	0.321	2
		%	88.6	11.4			
11	My peers' negative influence on participating in sports activities limits my desire to participate.	Number	38	6	2.86	0.347	3
		%	86.4	13.6			
12	My limited physical abilities prevent me from participating in sports.	Number	38	5	2.84	0.428	4
		%	86.4	11.4			
13	The university's sports programs do not meet my desire to participate.	Number	41	2	2.91	0.362	1
		%	93.2	4.5			

It is clear from Table 4 that statement No (13) was among the highest answers in this table, and it obtained an arithmetic mean of (2.91), a standard deviation of (0.362), a percentage of (93.1), and a frequency of (41) for the answer (strongly agree), and the statement is (the sports programs at the university do not meet my desires to participate in them), and the researchers believe that the sports programs in place have a major role in the students' willingness to participate in them or their reluctance to participate in them, so the quantity and type of sports programs is what determines the good psychological state of the students and the desire to participate in them, or the students consider them boring and routine programs that lead to the students' reluctance to participate in them, and this is what is consistent with what was reached by the study of Iman Hussein and Huda Muhammad (2014) ^[10], "A study of the reality of sports activities in government universities in Baghdad", where this study reached (the routine of sports activities and their lack of diversity, renewal and continuous

development and their lack of suitability to the desires, tendencies, aptitude and abilities of the students), (Iman, Huda, 2014) ^[10].

It is clear from Table 5 that statement No (15) came in first place among the opinions of the students, and it obtained an arithmetic mean of (2.93), a standard deviation of (0.255), a percentage of (93.1), and a repetition of (41) for the answer (strongly agree). The statement is (the sports tools and equipment are not commensurate with the number of female students at Al-Qadisiyah University). The researchers believe that the scarcity of sports equipment at Al-Qadisiyah University, along with the scarcity of sports halls and halls, leads to a lack of participation of a large group of female students in sports activities within the university, which has a negative impact on the female students towards participation. This is consistent with what was reached by the study of Iman Hussein and Huda Muhammad (2014) ^[10], "A study of the reality of sports activities in government universities in Baghdad", where this study reached (there is

a scarcity of material capabilities, playgrounds, sports halls, swimming pools, and bathrooms, in addition to the scarcity of sports equipment and material and moral incentives for

students that encourage them to (Practicing sports activities), (Iman, Huda, 2014) ^[10].

Table 5: Frequency values, percentages, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and ranks for the third axis: The role of material and human resources at Al-Qadisiyah University on female students' participation in sports activities

S	Phrases		Frequencies and percentages			Mean	SD	Rank
			I strongly agree	I agree	Disagree			
14	The sports halls and fields at Al-Qadisiyah University do not meet the minimum safety requirements	Number	40	4	0	2.91	0.291	2
		%	90.9	9.1	0			
15	The sports equipment and tools are not adequate for the number of female students at Al-Qadisiyah University	Number	41	3	0	2.93	0.255	1
		%	93.2	6.8	0			
16	The university lacks modern audio-visual aids to help me learn various exercises	Number	37	6	1	2.82	0.446	4
		%	84.1	13.6	2.3			
17	There are no suitable places for female students to change clothes for participating in sports activities	Number	17	15	12	2.11	0.813	6
		%	38.6	34.1	27.3			
18	The content of the sports activities available at Al-Qadisiyah University does not match the interests of female students.	Number	38	6	0	2.86	0.347	3
		%	86.4	13.6	0			
19	The focus on competitive sports diminishes the enjoyment of participating in sports activities.	Number	31	12	1	2.68	0.518	5
		%	70.5	27.3	2.3			

Table 6: Frequency values, percentages, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and ranks for the fourth axis: The extent of the influence of workers on the implementation of sports programs at Al-Qadisiyah University and female students' participation in sports activities

S	Phrases		Frequencies and percentages			Mean	SD	Rank
			I strongly agree	I agree	Disagree			
20	Sports activities staff do not motivate female students to participate in sports activities	Number	42	2	0	2.95	0.211	1
		%	95.5	4.5	0			
21	The goals of sports activities at Al-Qadisiyah University are far from my future goals.	Number	38	5	1	2.84	0.428	4
		%	86.4	11.4	2.3			
22	Sports activities staff do not study the athletic needs of female students at Al-Qadisiyah University before developing sports activities programs	Number	40	3	1	2.89	0.387	2
		%	90.9	6.8	2.3			
23	Aversion to participation is due to some sports staff's ignorance of the rules of the game and how to practice it	Number	39	4	1	2.86	0.409	3
		%	88.6	9.1	2.3			
24	The lack of a theoretical aspect when learning motor skills negatively impacted my participation in sports activities	Number	38	5	1	2.84	0.428	4
		%	86.4	11.4	2.3			
25	The number of sports staff is not commensurate with the number of female students at Al-Qadisiyah University	Number	33	9	2	2.70	0.553	5
		%	75	20.5	4.5			

Table 7: Frequency values, percentages, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and ranks for the fifth axis: What are the proposed solutions to motivate female students to participate in sports activities?

S	Phrases		Frequencies and percentages			Mean	SD	Rank
			I strongly agree	I agree	Disagree			
26	Highlighting the effective role of sports and its subsequent physical, educational, psychological, and social benefits for female students in the future.	Number	39	3	2	2.84	0.479	2
		%	88.6	6.8	4.5			
27	Raising cultural awareness of the importance of practicing sports activities at Al-Qadisiyah University through publications that highlight the multiple benefits of participating in sports.	Number	38	6	0	2.86	0.347	3
		%	86.4	13.6	0			
28	Activating the role of women's clubs to hold sports competitions to motivate female students to participate in sports activities at Al-Qadisiyah University	Number	36	7	1	2.80	0.462	4
		%	81.8	15.9	2.3			
29	Setting realistic and well-thought-out goals based on the financial and human resources available at Al-Qadisiyah University.	Number	34	8	2	2.37	0.544	6
		%	77.3	18.2	4.5			
30	Providing a sufficient number of sports fields, arenas, and gymnasiums is essential to motivate female students to participate in sports activities.	Number	23	20	1	2.50	0.550	8
		%	52.3	45.5	2.3			
31	Providing sports equipment and tools leads to an increase in the number of female students participating in sports activities.	Number	35	5	4	2.70	0.632	5
		%	79.5	11.4	9.1			
32	Providing a budget by the University of Al-Qadisiyah Presidency to cover expenditures for various sports activities.	Number	23	20	1	2.50	0.550	8
		%	52.3	45.5	2.3			
33	Providing material and moral incentives (trophies, medals, clothing, and certificates of appreciation) to female students participating in sports activities.	Number	29	12	3	2.59	0.622	7
		%	65.9	27.3	6.8			
34	Emphasizing the encouragement of sports staff to encourage female students to participate in sports activities at the early stages.	Number	17	15	12	2.11	0.813	9
		%	38.6	34.1	27.3			
35	Using modern technology when explaining various games helps encourage female students to participate in sports activities.	Number	34	8	2	2.37	0.544	6
		%	77.3	18.2	4.5			
36	Providing sufficient time for participation in sports activities by restructuring class hours for other subjects.	Number	44	0	0	3	0	1
		%	100	0	0			
37	Renewing, developing and diversifying sports activities to keep pace with ongoing changes and developments is one of the most important factors in motivating people to engage in sports activities.	Number	38	6	0	2.86	0.347	3
		%	86.4	13.6	0			

It is clear from Table 6 that statement No (20) came in first place among the students' opinions, and it obtained an arithmetic mean of (2.95), a standard deviation of (0.211), a percentage of (92.5), and a repetition of (42) for the answer

(strongly agree). The statement is (those working in sports activities do not motivate students to participate in sports activities). The researchers believe that the encouragement to practice sports activities comes from those in charge of

the sports programs set by the employees in the Student Activities Department at Al-Qadisiyah University, as it became clear from the answers of the basic sample that these employees do not motivate students to participate in various sports activities, and their lack of motivation contributes to the students' reluctance to participate in them. This was confirmed by Fairclough's study (2006)^[2], "The impact of physical education on improving students' levels of participation in student activities." This study confirmed (the lack of sufficient encouragement that students receive from those in charge of sports activities programs). (Fairclough, Stratton, 2006)^[2].

It is clear from Table (7) that statement No (36) came in first place among the answers for this table, and it obtained an arithmetic mean of (3), a standard deviation of (0), and a percentage of (100), as all the students answered (strongly agree) to this statement, which is (providing sufficient time to participate in sports activities by restructuring class hours for other lessons). The researchers believe that practicing sports activities requires enough time for the students to go to the gym, change clothes, do warm-up exercises, and then practice sports activities, after which they shower, change clothes, and return to the classroom. The female students of the College of Medicine do not have this time to practice sports activities, because studying medicine is a difficult study and its vocabulary is many and varied, and the school day is crowded with academic subjects. Therefore, the system of study periods for academic subjects must be restructured by the college deanship, and a time of at least two or more study periods per week should be given to practice sports activities, so that the female students have sufficient time to practice sports. This point is consistent with what was recommended by the study of Iman Hussein and Hoda Muhammad (2014)^[10], "A Study of the Reality of Sports Activities". Sports for Government Universities in Baghdad", where it recommended (the proper organization of student schedules and ensuring that sports activity schedules do not conflict with other lecture schedules). (Iman, Huda, 2014)^[10].

Conclusions

- The sports activities staff at Al-Qadisiyah University do not study the sports needs of female students before developing sports activities programs.
- The sports activities staff at Al-Qadisiyah University do not motivate female students to participate in sports activities.
- The sports equipment and tools currently available at Al-Qadisiyah University are not commensurate with the number of female students at the university.
- There is a negative influence by some female students on other female students regarding participation in sports activities, which limits the desire of other female students to participate.
- The numerous curricula consume all of the student body's time and do not allow for participation in sports activities.
- The lack of cultural awareness of the importance of practicing sports negatively impacted my participation in sports activities.

Recommendations

- Providing sufficient time to participate in sports activities by restructuring class hours for other subjects.

- Providing a sufficient number of playgrounds, arenas, and gyms will motivate female students to participate in sports activities.
- Raising cultural awareness of the importance of practicing sports by the presidency of Al-Qadisiyah University through publications outlining the benefits of participating in sports activities will encourage female students to participate in sports activities inside and outside the university.
- Urging those working in sports activities at Al-Qadisiyah University to study the athletic needs of female students before developing sports activities programs.
- Increasing the number and type of sports equipment and tools at Al-Qadisiyah University to match the number of female students practicing sports activities.
- Motivating some female students to participate in sports activities will have a positive impact, encouraging other students to participate.
- Promoting cultural awareness through publications within the university about the importance of practicing sports activities helps increase the number of female students participating in these activities.

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